

Amendments to the Specification

Delete the first paragraph on page 1 under the heading BACKGROUND AND

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION and replace with the following:

Many existing gaming machines include a primary or base game and one or more bonus games, rounds, or features wherein the bonus ~~game~~ feature is initiated when the player reaches a bonus triggering event in the primary game of the gaming device. These bonus rounds provide players with additional opportunities to accumulate winnings and are beneficial for attracting and keeping players at gaming machines.

On page 5, replace the first paragraph at the top of the page with the following:

When a player initiates a primary game 101, the bonus indicator 103 is automatically activated. Alternatively, the bonus indicator 103 may only be activated when a certain minimum bet is placed by the player. The bonus indicator operates at the same time that the underlying game is played. It is apparent to the player that the two events, play of the primary game and operation of the bonus indicator, are occurring substantially simultaneously. The primary game will directly yield an immediate reward if won; the bonus indicator, when stopped, will indicate whether the player will have an opportunity to potentially accumulate additional winnings during the play of a bonus round or feature of some sort ~~or will receive some other secondary award or prize enabled by the bonus indicator. This secondary prize, which may be predetermined or random, may consist of credits, money, or casino promotional items or messages.~~ The bonus indicator 103 is visually distinct and separate from the primary game 101.

Replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 22 and ending on page 6, line 6, with the following:

The gaming format of the bonus indicator 103 may be different than that of the primary game 101, such that it is apparent to the player that the function of the bonus indicator 103 is distinct from that of the primary game 101. That said, however, the bonus indicator may depict a card, dice, slot, or other game or indicia. A predetermined or random result of the bonus indicator 103 will inform the player that she has obtained the opportunity to ~~receive a secondary prize or~~ participate in a bonus round.

Replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 10 and ending on page 8, line 23, with the following:

The method of the present invention is practiced when a player initiates the primary game 101 by placing a wager and/or pressing the appropriate input buttons 104 to begin play. By starting the primary game 101, or by placing a predetermined minimum bet in the primary game 101, the player automatically activates the bonus indicator 103. In a preferred embodiment, the primary game 101 is a ~~five~~ five-reel slot game and the bonus indicator 103 is a single reel. The ~~single~~ single-reel bonus indicator 103 simultaneously spins as the reels of the primary game 101 also spin. The primary game is won if a predetermined combination of symbols are achieved. Additionally, the player may achieve a positive outcome from the bonus indicator, which means that he will ~~immediately be entitled to participate in~~ attain a secondary prize of any of a wide variety of possible prizes or go on to a bonus round or feature.